

## A New Leaf: Telling Untold Stories, James

Written by Christina Tetreault

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*A New Leaf provides shelters and services to our communities' homeless and domestic violence victims; behavioral health programs for low-income children and community programs including foster care services and MesaCAN (Community Action Network). MesaCAN services are utilized by shelter victims, A New Leaf clients and community members across the Valley. Read James story about dealing with the unexpected, something we all do.*

A Letter from James:

I would just like to take a minute to explain my current financial situation and how much A New Leaf's MesaCAN IDA Grant program has helped and will continue to help me.

Two years ago my father passed away. As a 20 year old, this shook me, but helped me realize two of the harsh realities of life: work and debt. After his death, I had to increase the hours I labored at work, in order to continue to pay my bills. Although this was stressful and time consuming, it is what had to be done. Beyond the stress of being independent, one realization that scared me with every class I took while working towards a B.A. degree in Global Logistics Management, was the amount of debt I was accruing. I have seen the statistics and read the horror stories of mounting debt crippling new graduates opportunities and ambitions, which made me want to avoid such a situation at all costs.

Finding the IDA (Individual Development Account) Grant program has allowed this burden to subside. While allowing me to contribute to my own education expenses, the program matches my contributions as well. This grant money allows me to save more of my own hard earned money for today and tomorrow. It truly is the gift that continues to give. Programs like this IDA Grant continue to bridge the gap for many people, which in turn, provides opportunities that would otherwise be unattainable.

My only hope as a student, tax payer, and idealist, is that these types of programs continue to expand, for not only the good of younger generations, but society as a whole.

Thank you for taking the time to read and share my experience. - James Roche

*MesaCANs Individual Development Account (IDA) program provides matched savings accounts to help people of low to moderate means build their own assets. Matched funds can be used for a college education (matching the students' savings 3 to 1 after completing the program) or for a down payment for first time homebuyers.*

For more information about A New Leaf programs including tours and how you can help, please contact 480-464-4648 or visit us at [www.TurnaNewLeaf.org](http://www.TurnaNewLeaf.org).

Arizona Foothills Magazine and Azfoothills.com have partnered with the comprehensive, non-profit, and human service agency, [A New Leaf](#), for an incredibly special series; one that is very near and dear to our organization's heart. "**Telling Untold Stories**" will illustrate multi-dimensional and raw stories of real men, women, and families within our communities who have been dealt a tricky hand of cards. These stories are ones of despair - ones of defeat - and, ones of fear. However, these stories become ones of faith - ones of determination - and, ones of hope.

When someone is in an abusive relationship or homeless, they often find themselves struggling to find help, not aware of the community resources available to them. A New Leaf is one of those critical resources. The agency has been a beacon of hope, supporting women and men who experience domestic violence and homelessness.

The mission of A New Leaf is Helping Families . . . Changing Lives. A New Leaf inspires and supports individuals and families in their journey to lifelong independence. The agency operates Autumn House, a domestic violence facility in the East Valley, as well as Faith House, a domestic violence shelter and transitional housing resource in the West Valley as well as a number of homeless shelters for those in crisis.

Last year, A New Leaf served nearly 21,943 individuals with resources, from immediate shelter, transitional housing, basic needs, job assistance, counseling and after school programs. Victims of domestic violence are able to start a new life due to the care and support of A New Leaf's staff and volunteers. Founded in 1971, A New Leaf is dedicated to making lives better and fighting against domestic violence and homelessness in our state.